

REMARKS

Summary

Claims 1-6, 11, 12, 23-28, 31-33, 43, 44, and 47 were rejected and Claim 13 was objected to in the present Office action. Claims 1 and 23 have been amended. No new matter has been introduced. The Applicants have considered the Response to Arguments offered by the Examiner in the present Office action, and respectfully traverse the rejection based on Mashino. Claim 1 has been amended so as to distinguish over Jang. Withdrawn Claim 45 has been cancelled, without prejudice, and new Claim 48 has been introduced.

Claim Objections

Claim 13 was objected to as being dependent on a rejected base claim, but the Examiner indicated that it would be allowable if rewritten in independent form, including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. In view of the amendment to Claim 1, the base claim is asserted to now be allowable, and the Applicants respectfully submit that the objection is moot.

Claim Rejections

35 U.S.C. §102 (b)

Claims 1-5, 11, 12, 23, 25-27, 43, 44, and 47 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102 (b) as being anticipated by Mashino et al. (US 5,886,759; "Mashino").

Claim 1 recites, *inter alia*, at least one optical sheet through which light from the light source passes and having a hardened part.

The Examiner states that Mashino discloses "a light source [36]...., and at least one optical sheet [39] through which the light source passes and having region most proximate to the light source with a hardened part [the sandwich on the left in Fig. 5, from the light guide 37 to the reflector sheet 70 and everything in-between]."

The Applicants respectfully submit that Mashino teaches that element 75 is an adhesive layer, that element 2 is a gray-colored tape, and that element 79 is a double-sided tape which is typically opaque, having an adhesive layer 78, a base

layer 76 and an adhesive layer 77. (Mashimo, col. 6, lines 43-54). The portion asserted to be the hardened part is opaque.

The aspect of Claim 1 recited above is one element of the claim, having two limitations: viz., light from the source passes through the sheet; and, the sheet has a hardened part. The sheet recited by Mashimo, as characterized by the Examiner, has opaque portions, and therefore prevents the passage of light from the source through the sheet. Therefore the Applicant respectfully submits that Mashimo does not teach all of the elements and limitations of Claim 1 and the arrangement thereof, and the claim is not anticipated.

The method claim of amended Claim 23 is similar in subject matter to Claim 1, and has been similarly amended, and is allowable for the same reasons.

Claims 1, 2, 11, 12, 23-25, 31-33, 46 and 47 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102 (e) as being anticipated by Jang et al. (US 6,891,580; "Jang"). The Applicants have chosen to amend Claim 1, without prejudice, to distinguish the present claims from the Examiner's interpretation of the reference.

Amended Claim 1 recites, *inter alia*, the hardened part has a longitudinal axis spaced a distance from a nearest edge of the optical sheet disposed parallel to the longitudinal axis.

Neither Jang nor Mashimo disclose or suggest this arrangement, and thus neither reference anticipates Claims 1 or 23, and the claims are allowable.

Claims 2-6, 11-13, 24-28, 31-33, and 43-44 and 47-48 are claims dependent on the now allowable claims, and are allowable, without more.

35 U.S.C. §103(a)

Claims 6 and 28 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Mashimo in view of Jeong et al. (US 6,595,651, "Jeong"). Nothing in Examiner's characterization of Jeong addresses the deficiencies in the references used to reject amended Claim 1, and the claims are allowable as claims dependent on an allowable base claim, without more.

Rejoinder of Withdrawn Claims

Withdrawn Claims 7-10, 14-21, 29, 30, and 34-42 depend on now allowable claims which should be considered as generic to the withdrawn claims. The

Applicants respectfully request that the withdrawn claims now be rejoined to the prosecution and allowed as well.

New Claim

New Claim 48 has been introduced, which finds support in the specification at paragraph [0085] and in Figs. 10-12. To the extent that Mashino may be held to teach a hardened part, such part is not integral to the optical sheet. Therefore not all of the elements and limitations of Claim 48 are taught or suggested by the reference.

Conclusion

Claims 1-6, 11-13, 23-28, 31-33, 43-44, and 47-48 are pending.

For at least the reasons given above, the Applicant respectfully submits that the pending claims are allowable.

The Examiner is respectfully requested to contact the undersigned in the event that a telephone interview would expedite consideration of the application.

Respectfully submitted,



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